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CRITERIA-BASED ASSESSMENT IS A TOOL OF MEASURING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILL (FROM TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN NAZARBAYEV INTELLECTUAL SCHOOL (NIS))

The article includes a new educational program criteria-based assessment system in the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Oskemen experience of English lessons in the development of writing skills criteria will be applied to the structure and its assessment.

Keywords: new educational program, Nazarbayev Intellectual School, criteria-based assessment system.

АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ САБАҒЫНДАҒЫ ОҚУШЫЛАРДЫҢ ЖЕТІСТІКТЕРІНІҢ КӨРСЕТКІШІ РЕТІНДЕ ЖАЗУ ДАҒДЫСЫН КРИТЕРИАЛДЫ БАҒАЛАУ (НАЗАРБАЕВ ЗИЯТКЕРЛІК МЕКТЕБІ ТӘЖІРИБЕСІНЕН)

Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасында жаңа білім беру бағдарламасына енгізілген критериалды бағалау жүйесі туралы, Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектептерінің тәжірибесі және Өскемен қаласының Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектебінде ағылшын тілі сабағында жазу дағдысын дамытуда критериалды бағалаудың қолданылуы, құрылымы және оның жүргізілуі қарастырылған.

Түйін сөздер: жаңа білім беру бағдарламасы, Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектебі, критериалды бағалау жүйесі, бағалау, жетгі, талпынады.

КРИТЕРИАЛЬНОЕ ОЦЕНИВАНИЕ НАВЫКА ПИСЬМА КАК ДОСТИЖЕНИЕ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА УРОКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА (ИЗ ОПЫТА НАЗАРБАЕВ ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНОЙ ШКОЛЫ)

В статье рассматривается новая образовательная программа в которой внедряется критериальное оценивание в Назарбаев Интеллектуальных школах и Назарбаев Интеллектуальной школе города Усть-Каменогорск, а также структура, организация и применение системы оценивания для развития навыка письма английского языка.

Ключевые слова: новая образовательная программа, Назарбаев Интеллектуальные школы, критериальное оценивание, формативные и суммативные работы, оценки, достиг, стремится.

Criteria-based assessment is a process based on a comparison of students' achievements with clearly defined collectively elaborated, known in advance to all participants (students, school administrators, parents and other legal representatives) criteria, consistent with the objectives and content of education, contributing to the

formation of students' learning and cognitive competence (Department of Education Quality Assessment, Astana, 2012).

The system of criteria-based assessment was implemented experimentally in Ust-Kamenogorsk Nazarbayev Intellectual school of Chemical and Biological direction in 2012-2013 academic years in 7, 8, 9 and 11 grades. Having started from 2013-2014 and subsequent years the system of assessing based on criteria will be functioning in all grades.

The core aim of implementing the criteria-based assessment is to assess objectively students' achievements in the educational process of Nazarbayev Intellectual schools and identify individual learning path of each student (Department of Education Quality Assessment, Astana, 2012). In order to assess objectively the criteria-based assessment system includes formative and summative (internal and external) assessments.

Table 1. Term 3 – Learning objectives mapped to assessment criteria. Grade 8

Writing	
To produce different written texts with the attention to detail and development relevant to the grade and subject as described in the Subject Programme.	8.W4 use with some support style and register appropriate to a limited variety of written genres on general and curricular topics and some curricular topics
	8.W5 develop with support coherent arguments supported when necessary by examples and reasons for a growing range of written genres in familiar general and curricular topics
	8.W6 link, independently, sentences into coherent paragraphs using a variety of basic connectors on a range of familiar general topics
	8.W7 use with minimal support appropriate layout at text level for a growing range of written genres on familiar general and curricular topics
	8.W8 spell most high-frequency vocabulary accurately for a growing range of familiar general and curricular topics

As the formative assessments carry corrective function and help both learners and teachers to improve learning process they are completed at each English class. The formative assessments can be of any form, for instance, oral and written tasks, monitoring, individual and whole class questioning and so on. The formatives are conducted at each lesson to eliminate potential problems and shortcomings before the summative work. This is a clear and transparent system which allows every student

to keep track of their own learning progress. They can either achieve (A) or work towards (WT) fixed learning objectives which we are given at the beginning of each term. The students are well-aware of the assessment and are given learning objectives at the beginning of each term to get introduced and to know what exactly they should achieve. There are four skills which are listening, reading, writing and speaking. To mark perceptive skills we use fixed rubrics and the rubrics for productive skills can vary due to the task type. The following is a table of learning objectives for productive (writing) skills for term 3.

Next table shows a number of unit topics and subtopics for term 3 which is extracted from a long term plan.

Table 2. Long term plan – Subject: English Grade 8

Term 3
<p>8.3A The Natural World (Content with language)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learning about geographical features of Kazakhstan (this relates to geography) ➤ Learning about world heritage sites around the world (this relates to geography and biology) ➤ Learning about a world heritage site in Kazakhstan ➤ Reading a newsletter on Our Endangered Planet ➤ Learning how to write a campaign letter ➤ Learning about the environment through learning about the saiga (this relates to geography and biology) ➤ Reviewing weather vocabulary
<p>8.3B Travel and Transport (Language with content)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Looking at modes of transport ➤ Learning about signs and the language of signs ➤ Creating a survey about commuting to school, either for the class or the whole school (this relates to geography and computer science) ➤ Discussion on travelling in and around Kazakhstan ➤ Writing an account of a journey in or across Kazakhstan ➤ Reading about mysterious places around the world
<p>8.3C Independent Project</p>

In the following 3 table we divide the whole term into weeks. The 3rd term consists of 11 weeks but here are only three weeks. In the Learning Outcomes column there are week topics taken from the long term plan as guidance to the short term plan. Below is an assessment opportunities where the learning objectives are put. In a yellow column there are lesson topics and the learning objectives to be assessed in a formative assessment.

We put the learning objectives equally under each learning outcomes.

Table 3. 2013-2014 Annual Overview Term Three

Dates	9-10 January (2 days)	13-17 January	20-24 January
Week Number	1	2	3
Unit Topics	Natural World	Natural World	Natural World
Strand Focus	Content w Lang Geographical and heritage sites	Content w Lang Our endangered planet	Content w Lang The Saiga
IELTS/ Subject / Thinking Skills	Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Reading Writing Speaking Listening
Broad Learning Objectives/ Outcomes	SWBAT: *Use habitat vocabulary to describe areas of Kazakhstan. (2 hours) *Listen to info about world heritage sites and summarise main points. (2 hours)	SWBAT: *Read about our endangered planet and answer questions at different levels of the taxonomy. (4 hours)	SWBAT: *Recognise attitude and opinion in written text about the saiga. (2 hours) *Write a campaign letter to help save the saiga. (2 hours)
Assessment Opportunities	8.S8, 8.L6, 8.L8	8.R2, 8.R7	8.R2, 8.R7, 8.W4, 8.W5, 8.W6, 8.W7, 8.W8

Below is a formative assessment created on the Learning Outcomes in yellow column (See Table 3) to assess writing learning objectives.

According to the marking schedule students are given “A” – achieved and “WT” – working towards marks which are inserted into an electronic journal. The formative assessment is set at every lesson taking 15-20 minutes time.

The advantages of the criteria-based assessment are that we assess objectively every student not their personality but their completed work according to the precise criteria which are well-known by every student in advance.

Although the system has more positive sides it might carry drawbacks as well. A lack of experience of teachers in both theoretical and practical aspects of the system and difficulties they face with in development of materials can be case in point.

The summative assessments are held once a term and given specifications to be distributed to students a week before the exam. The summative marks are also inserted

into an electronic journal.

Table 4. Formative Assessment

SP reference	Learning objective	Assessment Guidance
8.W4	- use with some support style and register appropriate to a written genres on curricular topics	
8.W5	-develop with support coherent arguments supported when necessary by examples and reasons	
8.W6	- link, independently, sentences into coherent paragraphs using a variety of basic connectors	
8.W7	- use with minimal support appropriate layout at text level	
8.W	- spell most high-frequency vocabulary accurately for a growing range of familiar general and curricular topics	
Skills		<i>Success criteria</i>
Writing		Learners have met this learning objective if they
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *develop and apply concise plans for writing. * Write using correct grammar. * Use a standard layout for presenting their message. * Write relevantly in accordance with a set question. * Write evaluatively connecting several ideas to create new ones. * Write with correct punctuation.

Having pre-determined standards of performance are the most defensible approach to assessment. Without a clear understanding of the subject goals students have a greater chance of becoming confused and wasting time trying to discover what it is we want them to learn. As you plan your teaching you will make choices on what you think is the best way to learn a particular skill, knowledge or attribute. If you go a small step further and make these goals clear to your students, then the written objectives used in curriculum design will serve a useful purpose in assisting your students' learning. The most direct way students experience what is needed to achieve the subject's learning objectives is through the assessment criteria.

Campaign Letter Marking Schedule

	Descriptors of requirements of LOs	What is needed to pass.
W4	A polite tone throughout.	Fully done.
W5	The letter is written in this order: *Problem is stated at the beginning /*with an appeal for action. *The animal /*its habitat are described. *The reasons for endangerment. *The actions you want taken. (The reasons may come before the description or be mixed with it, as long as it flows sensibly).	5 or 6 of these parts properly sequenced
W6	Basic connectors used: the main reason; secondly; another .. The writing is in the correct para.	*80% of the body must flow so the parts seem connected and logical. *3 of the 4 paras must contain only correct info.
W7	1.All writing is blocked against the left margin. 2.The order of the layout blocks is correct: • Dear • Body • Closing line and signature. 3. Body is paragraphed.	2 of these 3 requirements are correct.
W8		No more than 7 spelling errors.

Once the goals of assessment have been determined it is necessary to describe the criteria that will be used to judge whether the desired level of performance has been achieved. Learning objectives consist of three parts:

- the student action;
- the content;
- the standard required to meet the objective.

Assessment criteria relates to the third part of the objective, the standard of performance. Criteria are developed by analysing the learning outcomes and identifying the specific characteristics that contribute to the overall assignment. These are the standards by which learning is judged. Capturing the multiple dimensions of student performance is at the heart of criterion development. A range of diverse performance measures can be formulated for any given performance. The main question is, how many criterion are needed that contain neither irrelevant or miss important areas? The criteria then need to be linked with marks in some form of combined composite score.

Constructively aligned assessment criteria begin with a noun that complements the verb in the assessment tasks objective. For example, if the objective is for students to “explain how concepts in the subject interrelate” one of the criteria might be

“Clarity of explanation”. That is, the criterion describes the quality in the assessment task that will be judged during marking. Other commonly used quality words used in criteria include:

- Accuracy
- Currency
- Depth
- Impact
- Legibility
- Originality
- Succinctness
- Relevance

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria. Sounds simple enough, right? Unfortunately, this definition of *rubric* is rarely demonstrated in practice. The Internet, for example, offers many rubrics that do not, in fact, describe performance. I think I know why that might be and will explain that in Chapter 2, but for now let's start with the positive. It should be clear from the definition that rubrics have two major aspects: *coherent sets of criteria* and *descriptions of levels of performance* for these criteria.

The genius of rubrics is that they are descriptive and not evaluative. Of course, rubrics can be used to evaluate, but the operating principle is you match the performance to the description rather than “judge” it. Thus rubrics are as good or bad as the criteria selected and the descriptions of the levels of performance under each. Effective rubrics have appropriate criteria and well-written descriptions of performance.

What is the purpose of rubrics?

Like any other evaluation tool, rubrics are useful for certain purposes and not for others. *The main purpose of rubrics is to assess performances.* For some performances, you observe the student in the process of doing something, like using an electric drill or discussing an issue. For other performances, you observe the product that is the result of the student's work, like a finished bookshelf or a written report. Figure 1.1 lists some common kinds of school performances that can be assessed with rubrics. This list by no means covers every possible school performance. It is just meant to help you think of the types of performances you might assess with rubrics.

Commenting on students' work

Grades alone have been found to be a poor source of formative feedback. The reasoning behind why students received particular grades is often too unclear for them to use the information to improve their learning. Grades may even be counterproductive to learning as they divert attention away from looking for aspects of the student's work that they can be improved.

The greatest improvement to student learning is achieved by providing students with constructive feedback on their work (Black & William, 1998). For your comments to have an impact on learning students have to have an opportunity to revise their work. There is considerable advice available to assist you in undertaking this process efficiently. This short guide summarises some suggestions on how to write comments, which will help students to improve their written assignment.

Writing constructive comments

Producing an assignment involves a series of stages. Students begin by exploring the ideas, develop a critical position to the material, organise that material into a coherent argument and ensure the final work meets the required style and formatting. Some of the commonly used criteria for written work are the quality of the ideas and evidence used; the critical interpretation; development and organisation of the argument; and the style and corrections of the final paper. When providing comments you should give priority to content, context and organisation before you concentrate your comments on style and correctness.

Good feedback involves a conversation between the lecturer and the student. As well as an opportunity to respond to your comments, constructive feedback consists of at least three different kinds of statements. It should provide positive encouragement by identifying the good or successful features of the student's work. It needs to give information about how the assignment can be improved and it should make suggestions on the steps needed to meet the assignments criteria. An example of a helpful comment might be:

A great way to start to your assignment (positive encouragement).

Simple, direct, interesting (Give information).

Is there ever just a right or wrong answer? (Ask a question).

Don't draw too heavily on your source material (Give information).

Try to think critically and evaluate both sides of the argument then come up with your own original thesis (Provide a suggestion).

Whether you are praising the student's work, asking for or giving information, make a suggestion or correcting mechanics like style and grammar, ensure you phrase your comments in language that the student can understand. Keep the tone of your comments positive and encouraging. Students prefer negative comments to be phrased as a question rather than a statement. Keep the language literal and avoid misunderstandings that can arise from sarcasm, humour, abstract, technical language or abbreviations.

Helping students to use feedback

The closer the feedback is to the actual task the more useful it is to the student. Considering the amount of time you spend on commenting on students' work you should also make sure that it has maximum impact by making certain that the feedback

does not come too late to be acted upon. Here are some suggestions for encouraging students to use feedback they receive on their assignment:

- Set in-class exercises that are only for feedback
- Submit assessable work in stages
- Submit a plan for a project
- Allow resubmission of pieces of work
- Have students pair up and discuss how to improve their work
- Have students write down the one thing they will do as a result of their feedback.

To conclude, the formative assessment guides students to fulfill summative assignments successfully.

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